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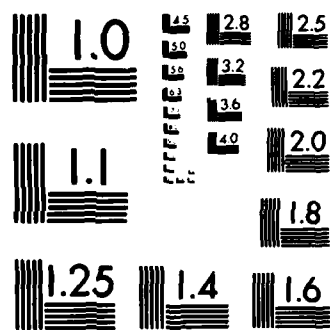
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THINGS FALL APART; THE CENTER CANNOT HOLD:  
THE CRISIS IN GOVERNING

Peter deLeon

June 1982

P-6738

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ABSTRACT

The Reagan Administration has proposed a number of policy initiatives which have the effect of decentralizing governmental services which, until recently, had increasingly become the responsibility of the federal (i.e., centralized) government. This paper inquires as to the possible effects of such decentralization tendencies. Drawing upon approaches advocated by the policy sciences and future studies, the analysis weighs goals, trends, and conditions to arrive at a set of projections and policies. (Prepared for the VIIth World Conference on Future Studies, June 6-9, 1982.)



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THINGS FALL APART; THE CENTER CANNOT HOLD:  
THE CRISIS IN GOVERNING\*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Governing has always been a challenge, before rules were codified, before words were recorded. To predict that it will be a continuing dilemma hardly requires Cassandra's robes. But possibly the allusions to Yeats' gloomy poetic visions are thematically too dire for our generation and the next.[1] After all, he was writing in the face and facts of the British in Ireland, the Bolsheviks in Russia, and post World War I Europe; his plea that

Surely some revelation is at hand;  
Surely the Second Coming is at hand

was apposite and understandable. Yet as we move annually towards the end of the century, major political cycles appear to be "Turning and turning in the widening gyre," their magnitudes only suspected, their effects uncertain. Significant changes in political landscape seem imminent--alterations that will certainly change the body politic we know, advise, and possibly shape. Perhaps the world Yeats knew was more endangered than ours today, but the threats fraught by man's continued

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\*Prepared for the VIIth World Conference on Future Studies, Stockholm, Sweden, June 6-9, 1982. I am grateful for the constructive comments of the Conference participants.

[1] The title of this paper and the subsequent quotations are, of course, drawn from William Butler Yeats, "The Second Coming" (1921).

assaults on the environment, the possibilities of technology run rampant,[2] and the ultimate catastrophe of nuclear destruction[3] all suggest that the next decade is just as imperiled as the one viewed by Yeats when he warned:

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.

This paper is based on the assumption that policy scientists are particularly well suited for predicting and affecting the future, at least from the standpoint of methodological skills. The founding mandates of the policy sciences were to understand what trends may exist, what conditions them, what they portend, and how they can be influenced for the basic good of humanity. Future studies, by definition, deal with situations and phenomena still to be experienced. The combination of the two is concerned with the policy study of future phenomena, a critical endeavor because the future of politics and its component policies is, at root, the future of humanity.

By way of illustration, special attention is devoted to the dynamics (some would say tensions) of centralized versus decentralized forms of administration or government, the crisis they might evoke, and how they may evolve between now and the end of the century. We are

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[2] This has been a recurrent tocsin since the Industrial Revolution, with such authors as H. G. Wells warning of the harmful consequences of technology upon society. The issue was popularized by Alvin Toffler, Future Shock (New York: Random House, 1970). A more scholarly discourse is Daniel Bell, The Post Industrial Society (New York: Basic Books, 1976).

[3] Although one can question his analysis, few would doubt the moral imperatives presented by Jonathan Schell, The Fate of the Earth (New York: Alfred P. Knopf, 1982), as he examines the possible consequences of nuclear war.

inquiring if, in fact, things do fall apart and the center cannot hold, and, if so, what might we expect in its stead. In a larger sense then, the paper poses, in Yeats' words, the underlying public policy question:

And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

Prior to an examination of what political hazards (or opportunities) lie before us, we should pause to consider the methodological approaches and concomitant constraints of such an exercise. The approach adopted here is that of the policy sciences, initially as set forth some thirty years ago by Harold D. Lasswell. Problem-oriented and humanistically-motivated, it encompasses five intellectual tasks which seem appropriate appropriate for the task at hand:

- o Goal clarification;
- o Trend description;
- o Analysis of conditions;
- o Projection of developments; and
- o Invention, evaluation, and selection of alternatives.

These are directed towards what Lasswell calls a "preferred set of outcomes" or values.[4] These approaches assume, with Dror, "some stability or ultrastability of relevant phenomena," for "without some regularity of phenomena no nomographic rules can exist, and such rules, in various ways, constitute the base for prediction." [5] This paper does

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[4] These are elaborated upon in Harold D. Lasswell, A Pre-View of Policy Sciences (New York: American Elsevier, 1971).

[5] Yehezkel Dror, "Some Fundamental Philosophical, Psychological, and Intellectual Assumptions of Future Studies," in C. H. Waddington (ed.), The Future as an Academic Discipline (New York: Elsevier, 1975). The Red Queen's croquet game, in Carroll's Alice in Wonderland--replete with moving wickets, animated balls, and recalcitrant mallets (to say nothing of the repeated threat of "Off with his head!")--is an example of the necessity of some recurring points of stability or reference.



not attempt to predict in the strict, scientific sense of presenting probabilistic assessments of future contingencies; as Ascher, among others, has demonstrated, this is a laudable goal but inherently doomed for the social sciences by faulty theory and inadequate data.[6] The future studies paradigm is directly applicable here:

The future is uncertain because of our limited knowledge of the world in general and because the future itself will evolve as a result of decisions not yet made. Future studies do not therefore aim primarily at producing predictions of future events; their aim is rather to provide an overall picture which is relevant to the problem at hand.[7]

Thus, this paper has rather circumspect goals--merely to propose a method to delimit a space of future developments and to emphasize how conditions and situations change over time in reference to the specified phenomena. Concomitantly, it fulfills another of the policy sciences conditions--the policy orientation--by asking how preferred trends and conditions can be achieved. Explicit in this approach is the assertion that the policy sciences have more to offer policymakers than mere "enlightenment" or something better than chance.[8] Lasswell's 1956 Presidential address to the American Political Science Association gives

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[6] William Ascher, Forecasting: An Appraisal for Policy-Makers and Planners (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), is an especially pertinent example since Ascher's analysis is set in a Lasswellian context.

[7] Brita Schwarz, Uno Svedin, and Bjorn Wittrock, Methods in Future Studies (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1982), p. 6.

[8] As exemplified by Carol Weiss, Using Social Research in Public Policy Making (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1977); and Charles E. Lindblom and David K. Cohen, Usable Knowledge: Social Science and Social Problem Solving (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1979) respectively.

ample evidence of the problem identification and policy insights such an approach can produce if carefully crafted.[9]

One must be reserved, particularly when extrapolating the here and now into the turbulent future. This is especially true when, as with this paper, one is principally dealing with the political actions of a single polity, in this case, the United States. Furthermore, the underlying normative precept--the enhancement of a specified set of values toward the ultimate goal of human dignity--which is an integral part of the policy sciences, must be taken into account, for such value statements are so amorphous as to obscure a welter of important distinctions, although this need not be the case.[10] The conclusions reached, therefore, should be subjected to additional consideration and data (both horizontal, i.e., from other national settings, and vertical, i.e., longitudinal) before placing great stock in them. Still, in spite of these precautions, the following analysis serves a worthwhile objective in setting out future trends and phenomena which, under a reasonable set of scenarios, could easily and fundamentally affect the means by which we govern ourselves and the everyday ways in which we live.[11] To deny such eventualities and the crises they could produce

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[9] Harold D. Lasswell, "The Political Science of Science," American Political Science Review, Vol. 50, No. 4 (December 1956), pp. 961-979, identified the energy crisis, communications technology, nuclear weapons proliferation, and genetic engineering as impending political crises.

[10] As is made clear by Harold D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, Power and Society (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1950), and Abraham Kaplan, American Ethics and Public Policy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963).

[11] The policy relevance of future studies is a major and perhaps idiosyncratic theme of Schwarz et al., Methods in Futures Studies, especially "The Legitimacy of Future Studies," Chap. 6. For a thoughtful, dissenting view, see Jonathan I. Gershuny, "What Should Forecasters Do? A Pessimistic View," in Peter R. Baehr and Bjorn Wittrock (eds.), Policy Analysis and Policy Innovation (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1981), Chap. 9.

would only postpone their trauma to later years and governing crises, a charge no concerned analyst should wish to incur or abdicate to future generations.

## II. THE CENTER CANNOT HOLD

The questions posed by centralization versus decentralization are at least as old as the American Republic; since the days of Hamilton and Jefferson, the American political system has actively debated the pros and cons of centralized government.[12] In the twentieth century, the debate has become framed in terms of "pluralistic democracy" versus "administrative efficiency," with "layered administration" and "runaway bureaucracy" being cast as everybody's favorite contemporary poltergeist.[13] Since the era of the New Deal, it is clear that the American body politic has grown increasingly oriented around the public sector and, until very recently, federalized in terms of the concentration of public sector power in Washington, D.C. In terms of basic human needs, the federal government has intervened unchallenged and pervasively until it has virtually preempted (either directly or indirectly through grants to state or local governing units) all other levels of government. These areas of government involvement include old age insurance, medical attention, education, housing, and other social welfare services, functions which were previously the domain of the local community or even the family unit.

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[12] See Lynton K. Caldwell, The Administrative Theories of Hamilton and Jefferson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1949).

[13] A recent review of the pertinent literature as well as a contribution in its own right is Douglas Yates, Bureaucratic Democracy: The Search for Democracy and Efficiency in American Government (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982).

The institutional heritages of the New Deal, the Fair Deal, the New Frontier, the Great Society, and even Nixon's New Federalism have resulted in a highly centralized American political system. This tendency has been reinforced by the advent of new technologies which make centralized control more feasible than had ever been possible.[14] Finally, it should be noted that this movement has not been duplicitous or uninvited. It has been abetted, perhaps even aided and urged, by the reluctance of the state governments and surely local governments to act in any positive manner toward recognition, let alone solution of their problems or the retention of their local powers; social welfare, transportation, and urban renewal problems and services were seen as "the other person's problem" and "too large for us to handle" as they were almost eagerly passed to Washington for remedy.

The centralization phenomenon was not, of course, an uniquely American condition. The Western European democracies had already made commitments in these directions as early as a century before, with France, Germany, the Scandanivian nations, and lastly England moving towards strongly centralized bureaucratic forms of government, although with varying degrees of public participation. The long-established nation-states of Europe even gave serious consideration to economic integration "spilling over" into political unity.[15] The totalitarian governments scarcely needed to be persuaded of the advantages of highly

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[14] Karl W. Deutsch, The Nerves of Government (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), first set out the potential effects of communications networks upon the governing process.

[15] The general statement is found in Ernst Haas, The Uniting of Europe (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1953); for details, read Michael Curtis, Western European Integration (New York: Harper and Row, 1965).

centralized administration. Third and Fourth world nations all adopted centralized forms of authority to expedite their pell-mell rush towards modernity.[16] If political structures run in fashion, then the trend was towards a tight centralization of government functions, even if the underlying, supportive political cultures, consensus, and basic rationale were lacking.

By the middle 1960s, political fissures began to appear in the nation-states of the Third and Fourth worlds. At first, political scientists argued that the fractionalization phenomena were largely restricted to the lesser developed nations and were the result of the arbitrary manner in which these states had been formed, conditions exacerbated by economic scarcities and political growth pains.[17] This explanation, however convenient and--in many cases--true was soon revealed as insufficient, for the political structures in many of the industrialized nations also began to dissemble. Regionalism became an important political fact of life in established nations such as the United Kingdom (witness the emergence of minority but distinctly nationalist parties), Belgium, Canada, and even the Federal Republic of Germany (where the distinction between the Bund and the Lander reemerged from the totalitarian and occupation periods). That similar movements should reappear in the American political environment was forecast by the proponents of pluralistic democracy[18] with support from the

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[16] See, for instance, the essays collected by Joseph LaPalombara (ed.), Bureaucracy and Political Development (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971).

[17] The change from developmental optimism to pessimism was signalled by the final volume in the SSRC series on political development, Leonard Binder et al., Crises and Sequences in Political Development (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971).

[18] As perhaps best articulated by Robert A. Dahl, A Preface to Democratic Theory (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956). Also see Robert A. Dahl and Charles E. Lindblom, Politics, Economics and Welfare (New York: Harper & Row, 1953).

incrementalist school of thought.[19] The welfare ethos, so prevalent in the 1950s and 1960s, could be more characterized by its waning or, as Lowi commented, the beginning of The End of Liberalism. [20]

In the United States, there is no question that the current Administration is aggressively seeking to reduce the federal bureaucracy in at least two ways. First, in some instances, federal government programs and even agencies are simply being discontinued; these can be found in such diverse areas as education,[21] energy,[22] and legal services.[23] Second, many public sector programs presently administered in Washington are being turned over to the states,[24] with the assurance that the federal government will assist in the transition by assuming obligations now held by the states (e.g., medical insurance)[25] and providing federal funds to finance the states' new

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[19] Charles E. Lindblom, The Intelligence of Democracy (New York: The Free Press, 1965), indicates his assessment of incrementalism by his choice of title.

[20] Theodore Lowi, The End of Liberalism (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), was, of course, only one of a host of authors who forecast such a fundamental shift.

[21] Rochelle L. Stanfield, "Breaking Up the Education Department--School Aid May Be the Real Target," National Journal, Vol. 13, No. 43 (October 24, 1981), pp. 1907-1910.

[22] Burt Solomon, "Commerce Department Is the Big Winner in DOE Demolition Derby," Energy Daily, Vol. 9, No. 241 (December 18, 1981), pp. 1-2.

[23] Scot J. Paltrow, "Cutbacks Force Legal Aid to Reject Cases, Often Leaving Poor Helpless," Wall Street Journal, January 28, 1982, pp. 25, 36; and Elizabeth Drew, "A Reporter at Large: Legal Services," The New Yorker, Vol. 63, No. 2 (March 1, 1982), pp. 97-113.

[24] Rochelle L. Stanfield, "'Turning Back' 61 Programs: A Radical Shift of Power," National Journal, Vol. 14, No. 9 (February 2, 1982), pp. 369-374, gives a programmatic assessment of Reagan's New Federalism.

[25] See Linda E. Demkovich, "Medicaid for Welfare: A Controversial Swap," National Journal, Vol. 14, No. 9 (February 2, 1982), pp. 362-369.

programmatic responsibilities. The Reagan New Federalism policy, as outlined in his State of the Union address, makes it clear that these are only temporary, transitional measures and that by the end of the decade, federal assistance will itself be terminated; by 1990, state and local programs must be financially self-supporting.[26]

Perhaps the most telling condition of the Reagan Administration's reductions are not that they are occurring; every administration enters office with a promise to promote greater governmental economies and efficiencies. But the "New" New Federalism makes little claim for either. Reagan appointees admit in some cases, such as the dismemberment of the Department of Energy (DOE), "This isn't being done for savings. There will be savings, I am sure but it is not being done because there is a cost savings of this much or that much." [27] The inability to measure a program's productivity or worth has not deterred the Reagan termination juggernaut: Assistant Labor Secretary Angrisani testified that "There is no standard measure out there that everybody will accept as the basis for success or failure of the [Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, CETA] program;" yet it is destined for eradication by the end of this fiscal year, even though the most recent evaluations of CETA have been positive.[28]

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[26] Stanfield, "'Turning Back' 61 Programs."

[27] The statement was made by Department of Energy Undersecretary Guy Fiske, and reported in Anonymous, "Delay in DOE Demise," Energy Daily, Vol. 10, No. 29 (February 12, 1982), p. 2.

[28] The quotation and assessment are from William J. Lanouette, "Life After Death--CETA's Demise Won't Mean the End of Manpower Training," National Journal, Vol. 14, No. 6 (February 6, 1982), pp. 241-244; quotation at p. 241.

If economies and efficiencies--normally the basis for the elimination of programs and policies--are not motivating the current wave of budget reductions, program terminations, and agency closures, what then might be the cause? The answer must reside in political ideology. Although fiscal restraints created by enormous budget deficits and other economic stresses may support the elimination or decentralization of national programs, seemingly these are secondary to the ideological tenets which hold that such programs are not the proper responsibility of a federal, centralized government. Most educators and many policymakers agree that federal compensatory education programs have been highly effective but their funds are scheduled for a thirty percent reduction next year because, as one observer noted, education is "simply something the federal government shouldn't be doing. Education is the province of the states and localities...and no matter how effective a federal program may be, it still intrudes on the state and local domain." [29] Nor is decentralization the exclusive domain of the American political conservative. Many liberal groups have supported solar energy technologies and opposed nuclear power stations largely because of the former's decentralized energy distribution systems. [30]

The decentralization of government functions is the common denominator in almost all of these actions. Few question that there should be aid to families with dependent children (AFDC) programs; the

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[29] Rochelle L. Stanfield, "'If It Ain't Broke, Don't Fix It,' Say Defenders of Compensatory Aid," National Journal, Vol. 14, No. 5 (January 30, 1982), pp. 201-204; quotation at 201.

[30] Amory Lovins, Soft Energy Paths (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger for Friends of the Earth, 1977); French and German parallels are traced by Dorothy Nelkin and Michael Pollack, The Atom Besieged (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1981).



real policy question is how they should be funded and where should they be administratively located? Similar questions can be asked for other social welfare functions, energy research and subsidies, education, transportation, and community development programs. Answers offered by the presiding Administration include the private sector, public charities, and state and local governments. In the first instance, one need only scan the Department of Energy's sunset review document:[31]

In view of the demonstrated success of energy markets in those cases where they have been allowed to function freely and given the limited role and responsibilities of the federal government in this sector of the economy, it is no longer necessary to maintain a Cabinet-level Department of Energy. The department was established to address a set of problems that were peculiar to their time and that were largely the result of a philosophy that stressed excessive government intervention in energy markets in the first place.

Job training programs have been especially ticketed for assumption by the private sector, Reagan spokespersons claiming that since the private sector has the most to gain, it should accept the bill.[32] Many social welfare functions and subsidies for the arts have been left on the doorstep of private foundations and charitable groups.[33] The largest recipients of programs being dispersed by the Reagan shift towards decentralization are the state governments. (There are, in addition, combinations of these newly-assigned program sponsors, such as municipal

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[31] The three-volume, 773-page DOE sunset review is reported upon by Burt Solomon, "DOE Memoirs to Congress," Energy Daily, Vol. 10, No. 28 (February 11, 1982), pp. 1, 4; quotation at p. 1.

[32] See Lanouette, "Life After Death--CETA's Demise...", and Joanne S. Lubin, "Demise of CETA Jobs Affects Urban Services--and Changes Lives," Wall Street Journal, May 12, 1982, pp. 1, 12.

[33] Examples are offered by Carol Hymowitz, "Reagan's Welfare Cuts Shift Charity Burden to Religious Groups," Wall Street Journal, March 15, 1982, pp. 1, 23.

governments cooperating with private industry to create new job training programs.)[34]

This move towards decentralization of federal programs is largely the result of the perception that such programs cannot be or should not be operated from the federal, centralized level, a philosophical position surely reinforced by the noted failures of the Great Society's social programs. In economist's terms, the pendulum is demand pushed rather than supply pulled, for there appears to be little enthusiasm on the part of the state, local, and private sectors to assume these new responsibilities. Indeed, it is an open question as to whether they have the incentives and capabilities to do so.[35] Therein lies the basic question: can a highly centralized, industrialized society permit the Hegelian dialectic to occur in terms of governing and, if so, what do such shifts portend in terms of governmental crisis or stability?

### III. THE SECOND COMING

The answers are not altogether obvious but they are unquestionably relevant and pressing, both within the next few years and over the next decade. Unless responsibly posed and resolved, the dynamics and tensions between decentralized and centralized bureaucratic structures could pose a continuing and debilitating crisis in governance.[36] But

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[34] The Reagan blue ribbon panel on public-private sector initiatives addresses these relationships. See Dick Kirschten, "Even If Charity Does Begin at Home, Government May Still Play a Key Role," National Journal, Vol. 14, No. 21 (May 22, 1982), pp. 902-905.

[35] An assessment is provided by Neal R. Peirce, "The States Can Do It, But Is There the Will?" National Journal, Vol. 14, No. 9 (February 27, 1982), pp. 374-379.

[36] Serious problems with the Reagan program are described by Rochelle L. Stanfield, "A Neatly Wrapped Package with Explosives Inside," National Journal, Vol. 14, No. 9 (February 27, 1982), pp. 356-362.

before exploring the possible ramifications for policymakers, one might reasonably ask if Reagan's New Federalism, in fact, represents a normal, expected swing, an equilibrating of the political pendulum.[37] The answer, I assert, might be interesting to academicians but, for policy purposes, it is almost irrelevant, because present and emerging conditions are so different from prior periods and past transitions as to render earlier experiences almost worthless. The political communities viewed by Hamilton and Jefferson or Franklin Roosevelt and Herbert Hoover are so far removed from the contemporary ones that they offer few, if any, lessons. The separation of public and private sectors has become so obscured that the distinction carries little analytic weight. "At present, the seemingly simple questions of what is public and what is private, what is profit and what is not-for-profit, are no longer easy to answer." [38] Bell states the institutional problems succinctly: "The emergence of new structural forms of non-bureaucratic organization is one more item on the long agenda of new problems for the post-industrial society." [39] Expectations for government services or "entitlements" are high and virtually impossible to reduce, especially in the area of tangible social services. Everybody benefits and none is eager to surrender his or her perquisites. Helco observes:[40]

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[37] Two opposing perspectives are provided by John R. Gist, "The Reagan Budget: A Significant Departure from the Past;" and Bruce L. R. Smith and James D. Carroll, "Reagan and the New Deal: Repeal or Replay?" both in P.S., Vol. 14, No. 4 (Fall 1981), pp. 738-746, and 758-766, respectively.

[38] David Nachmias and Ann Lennarson Greer, "Governance Dilemmas in an Age of Ambiguous Authority," Policy Sciences, Vol. 14, No. 2 (April 1982), p. 106.

[39] Bell, The Post Industrial Society, p. 69.

[40] Hugh Helco, "Frontiers of Social Policy in Europe and America," Policy Sciences, Vol. 6, No. 4 (December 1975), pp. 413-414.

The modern welfare state intermingles benefits, dispensations, and transfers to such an extent that it is practically impossible to separate dependence and nondependence. Virtually all citizens are involved in paying and receiving or are in some other way tied into the family of social policies. The difference in degree of dependence is hardly self-evident between the single mother receiving public assistance, free medical care and welfare milk, and the rugged individualist dependent only on the tax law for subsidizing interest payments to his otherwise too-costly home, state enforced credit regulations to multiply his purchasing power, tax indulgences for his lucrative retirement plan and expense account, and the government agencies planning to make others bear the social costs of urban renewal, private transportation and fighting inflation.

Furthermore, Helco's illustrations suggest that these issues are endemic to the industrialized societies, i.e., not just the United States. In short, "Governance in the interpenetrated society poses new and difficult problems which do not have self-evident solutions. Politics have a wider sweep and cut more deeply into society than previously assumed." [41]

Not only is the application of past experience problematic, but serious doubts have been voiced by many key actors in the centralization drama to the theme: is decentralization something to be desired? Demkovich, in reviewing the Reagan-proposed Medicaid for Welfare trade, notes that "The governors and state legislators, for their part, have insisted for years that welfare policy and financing, though not necessarily program administration, are more appropriately federal responsibilities." [42] Congressman Jack Brooks describes the situation more colloquially: "What it means is, let's dump our expenses on

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[41] Nachmias and Greer, "Governance Dilemmas in an Age of Ambiguous Authority," p. 111.

[42] Demkovich, "Medicaid for Welfare: A Controversial Swap," p. 362.

somebody else and run." Congressional staffers are even harsher when they claim that their Congressmen believe that "if you lined up all the jerks in the world, the first 20 would be state legislators." [43] State governors are scarcely more receptive, warning that "the wave of federal budget cutting has created 'disarray and chaos' in state and local governments and is paralyzing their ability to plan their own budgets." [44] Indeed, the almost total lack of political receptiveness to the New Federalism proposals has forced the Reagan Administration to postpone its decentralization timetable. [45] Similar political obstacles have delayed the dissolution of the Departments of Energy and Education, although specific programs have been eliminated. [46]

And, finally, if the past is not a confident guide to the future, the present is hardly more lucid. Administrative spokespersons have alluded to the failures of the previous policies while claiming, at worst, the future would have to be better. But, objectively, there is little basis save philosophy and hope for making such claims. As Richard Nathan points out, "In the diverse and fluid policy setting of American federalism, there is no centrally available data source that

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[43] Admittedly drawn from a partisan sample, these quotations are from Dennis Farney, "'New Federalism' Gets Icy Reception from Many Democrats in Congress," Wall Street Journal, February 23, 1982, p. 29.

[44] Gaylord Shaw, "U.S. Cutbacks Create Chaos in States, 3 Governors Say," Los Angeles Times, November 6, 1981, p. 16; also see Peirce, "The States Can Do It...", for a discussion of some of the intra-state conflicts (e.g., between governors and legislators).

[45] See Robert Pear, "White House Halts Attempts to Shift Welfare to States," New York Times, April 4, 1982, p. 1; and Linda E. Demkovich, "Political, Budget Pressures Sidetrack Plan for Turning AFDC Over to States," National Journal, Vol. 13, No. 38 (September 19, 1981), pp. 1671-1673.

[46] Robert D. Hershey, Jr., "Department of Energy Stays Alive," New York Times, February 25, 1982, pp. 21, 25.

can be used for the nation as a whole to answer such questions as which services were reduced most as a result of the Reagan Administration's policy changes, and what groups were most affected by those cuts." [47] (The condition is exacerbated for the Bureau of the Census has received significant reductions in its funds.) [48]

There is, then, every reason to assume that the contemporary mores and moves towards greater decentralization of recently-assumed governmental functions and services, if continued, will pose a serious crisis in governance because of the reluctance of the populace to surrender these benefits, the questionable ability of the private sectors and local governing units to assume these new roles, and the inability of planners to draw upon the historical experience necessary to plan the transitions. The current shift towards decentralization, with its rampant uncertainties in trends, effects, and even data thus presents a clear candidate for the policy sciences and future studies approaches. [49] It is to these endeavors and methodologies we now turn. Lacking them, we can barely discern the direction of the "rough beast" as it "slouches towards Bethlehem;" we can scarcely predict its magnitude, shape, or time of arrival, let alone intelligently inquire if it represents the Second Coming.

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[47] Richard P. Nathan, "The Nationalization of Proposition 13," P.S., Vol. 14, No. 4 (Fall 1981), p. 755.

[48] See John Hebers, "Census Bureau Plans More Cuts; Threats to Basic Research Feared," New York Times, January 31, 1981, pp. 1, 16; and Rochelle L. Stanfield, "Numbers Crunch--Data Funds Cut Just When More Statistics Are Needed," National Journal, Vol. 13, No. 48 (November 28, 1981), pp. 2118-2121.

[49] Again, see Lasswell, A Pre-View of Policy Sciences, and Schwarz et al., Methods in Futures Studies.

#### IV. GOALS, TRENDS, AND PROJECTIONS

In postulating a future, one is first tasked with a philosophical elaboration of where one wants to go, that is, a delineation of the normative goals or values one wishes to pursue. In the example of governance in the western industrialized societies, these goals are not difficult to discern, for most of the European and North American political cultures are centered around largely democratic norms as developed over the last three centuries. These include freedom of opportunity, governmental accountability, individual equity, equal protection under the law, and basic human dignities (or at least an absence of indignity). Even where and when governments have consciously violated and abrogated these values, their nominal adherence to democracy and its philosophical underpinnings has emphasized the universal acceptance of such goals. What is, of course, much more troublesome is the manner in which such goals are often ignored, subverted, or, in more benevolent political settings, transformed into actual government policies. This paper has no intention of addressing the first problem; the examination of authoritarian political systems is well beyond its scope and objective. The second, however, falls readily into what has been alluded to as the tension or conflict between centralized and decentralized governmental structures.

Big has no monopoly on bad; decentralized, small units of government can be just as pernicious as large, centralized ones, albeit on a more limited scale. Witness the brutality of local police forces against civil rights activists in the southern portions of the United States during the 1960s or many contemporary terrorist cells. Indeed,

some would argue that even with the advantages of modern communications and a complete monopoly on coercive authority, a central government can grow too large to control its population, as recent ethnic rumblings from the Soviet Union might seem to suggest.[50] Although, almost by definition, smaller units of government can be more responsive to the articulated needs of their constituents, it does not mean that they necessarily act more responsibly. The American populist movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries was primarily a reaction against the callousness and corruption of local governments and politicians.[51] And, lastly, there are problems which, perforce, virtually demand large, coordinated government operations, such as national security and (more arguably) energy resources allocation,[52] that is, problems which extend well beyond the scope and competence of local governing bodies.

It follows that--contrary to some economists' and environmentalists' desires--small is not necessarily beautiful, nor is large necessarily undesirable, at least in the pursuit of democratic values. Thus, in the matters of goal clarification and pursuit, an organization's location on the centralization-decentralization continuum is not a sufficient condition for determining the achievement of specified values. This expression reflects the continual complexities

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[50] See Dimitri Simes (ed.), Nationalities and Nationalism in the USSR: A Soviet Dilemma (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, 1977); and Murray Feshbach, "Between the Lines of the 1979 Soviet Census," Problems of Communism, Vol. 31, No. 1 (January/February 1982), pp. 27-37.

[51] Still the classic on the subject is Richard Hostadter, The Age of Reform (New York: Random House, Vintage edit., 1954).

[52] The intersection is joined by Alvin L. Alm, "Energy Supply Interruptions and National Security," Science, Vol. 211, No. 4489 (27 March 1981), pp. 1379-1385. For greater detail, see David A. Deese and Joseph S. Nye (eds.), Energy and Security (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger, 1981).



faced by the policy sciences, especially when dealing in future contingencies. Either a highly centralized or a highly decentralized set of bureaucratic structure might work towards the attainment of such goals. The evidence at hand, however, suggests that there are other variables or conditions which are at least--if not more--influential. This is certainly not to claim that goal definition is irrelevant; only that it must be sensitively treated in combination with conditions and trends to arrive at projections and policies.

It is always risky to extrapolate contemporary trends into the future. Still, it can be hypothesized that despite strong institutional resistances, most of the western industrialized societies are bureaucratically moving towards smaller, more fragmented governmental units. In some instances, decentralization has always been the mode; e.g., education can be described as a cottage industry compared to other governmental functions in terms of unit size (if not aggregate expense), yet even education is becoming increasingly fractionated as public schools are being supplanted with private alternatives.[53] The previous section detailed how the United States is only the most recent example of the shift to decentralized authority.[54] Although the "final score" is not in as to the success of the Reagan initiatives, it is safe to assume that the trend is towards the reduced authority of the federal

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[53] Examples of the concern for autonomy within the higher levels of Sweden's education system are provided by Rune Premfors, "Values and Value Tradeoffs in Higher Education Policy," Policy Sciences, Vol. 15 (forthcoming). Additional European examples may be drawn from John S. Ambler, "Politicialization of Higher Education in Britain and France," Policy Studies Journal, Vol. 10, No. 1 (September 1981), pp. 136-149.

[54] The United Kingdom under the Conservative Party offers additional evidence to the currency if not the success of this transition; see Richard A. Chapman, "Reducing the Public Sector: The Thatcher Government's Approach," Policy Studies Journal, Vol. 9, No. 8, Special Issue #4 (1980-81), pp. 1162-1163.

government, the greater assumption of governmental functions and services by state and municipal units, and a resumption by the private sector of many roles which had been assumed by the federal government over the last fifty years.

However welcome such trends might be for some, caution should be exercised here, for as clear as these trends might be, it is equally clear that the recipient units are scarcely eager to accept their newly-ascribed roles. In many cases, there is serious doubt if they have the capabilities;[55] in even more cases, legitimate concerns over their willingness or inclinations can be observed.[56] The magic of the market place has demonstrated as many shortcomings as the regulatory systems imposed to correct its failures.[57] Even in the instance of technology development, where the firm is thought to be preeminently sage, major developmental programs that in prior times the government might have managed (some say mismanaged) have been badly mishandled by private enterprise.[58]

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[55] Walter D. Broadnax, "The New Federalism: Hazards for State and Local Governments?" Policy Studies Review, Vol. 1, No. 2 (November 1981), pp. 231-235, holds that the states and municipal governments lack the design, analytic, and personnel resources necessary to assume these added responsibilities.

[56] Peirce, "The States Can Do It...", grants the states higher marks on capability than enthusiasm. Stanfield, "A Neatly Wrapped Package with Explosives Inside," is skeptical on both counts.

[57] See Paul W. MacAvoy (ed.), The Crisis of the Regulatory Commissions (New York: W. W. Norton, 1970); and Barry Mitnick, The Political Economy of Regulation: Creating, Designing, and Removing Regulatory Reforms (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).

[58] For instance, the Exxon Corporation hardly covered its corporate research identity with R&D laurels when it suddenly abandoned its multi-billion dollar oil shale/synthetic fuel project. See John McCaughey, "Colony Bailout: Yet Another Mishap for Exxon, Or Just Another Reflection of the Times?" Energy Daily, Vol. 10, No. 87 (May 10, 1982), pp. 2-3.

Even though the trends may be apparent, significant uncertainties still make projections at least obscure and, at worst, dangerous for at least two reasons. First, we have little idea as to how long these trends will continue. Although the pervasiveness of the recent shifts towards the decentralization of governmental functions and services indicates that the trend is not ephemeral, the Hegelian and pendulum metaphors both imply that the trend should not be considered permanent, or even long term in nature. The equilibrating nature of the pluralistic political system--at least as experienced in the Western democracies--promises that sooner or later, centralized bureaucracies will reemerge and invalidate the projections and policies based on decentralized, discrete units of government and their bureaucratic structures. If one is not careful, the reversed trend could, in a Thermidorian reaction, produce organizational monoliths far beyond any democracy's desire or ability to control. Second, as suggested above, the trends may be obvious, but it is not obvious that the institutional conditions are receptive. Lacking fertile bureaucratic soil, the seeds of decentralization may easily fall fallow or, even worse, become the seeds of discord as they prove problematically sterile.

The key to making accurate projections, therefore, appears to be a prescient interpretation of trends and conditions. If both can be read, then "safe" predictions can be assumed and appropriate policy alternatives posed and selected. In the example of centralized versus decentralized bureaucratic structures, I have argued that the trend is discernible, the time frame uncertain, and the conditions apparently unsuitable. If this is a realistic assessment, projections become a

great deal more questionable for there are little means to estimate the relative weights of trends versus conditions. That is, neither can be treated as an irresistible force or an unmovable object.[59] Both can and do affect each other; trends will alter conditions and vice versa.

Confronted with such conceptual impasse, the policy scientist must return to the value criterion and ask: what values or norms does one wish to manifest or enhance and what affect would the specified trends have on the achievement of those goals? If the answers are positive, the projection task can be assumed and the analytic issue becomes less one of forecasting and more one of policy formulation, selection, and implementation. The key questions are now no longer "if" and "when" but "how."

In more concrete terms, we can offer the following illustrations. Assume that the noted trend towards decentralized units of government is perceived as basically beneficial in terms of ultimately providing a more responsive level of government answering to individual constituent requirements across a wide variety of social services. These are defined as worthwhile objectives and the trends seem to point in that direction; however, the conditions are not suitable for accomplishing a transition. Hence, one needs to devise policies that make conditions more acceptable. Fortunately, the policy cupboard is far from bare. These policies can be either large scale (e.g., guaranteed revenue sharing or maybe constitutional amendments so as to offer some form of stable expectations) or much more discrete in nature (e.g., education programs to improve the analytic capabilities of local state and municipal levels of government). Information, Wilensky says, is power;[60] this authority--especially in light of the revolutions in

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[59] Unless, of course, one is a true Marxist.

[60] Harold L. Wilensky, Organizational Intelligence: Knowledge and Policy in Government and Industry (New York: Basic Books, 1967).

communications and data management--must be divided among the governing units to promote trust as well as to share the feedstock of government.[61] The relationship of the public and private sectors vis-a-vis the polity's welfare functions must be more closely examined to understand how the two can more confidently complement each other; for instance, what roles can the private sector assume beyond that of a delivery system?[62] Greer notes that there is a strong tradition in the Western democracies of citizens' voluntary boards that could readily be tapped to absorb some of the governing roles shed by the centralized government bureaucracy.[63] And Yates offers specific institutional templates for combining democratic values with bureaucratic efficiencies, outlining organizations' roles down to the local neighborhood level and street level bureaucrat.[64]

Special attention should be paid to the municipal levels of government, for compared to state levels, they will probably be more stressed by the new responsibilities and almost certainly less prepared. This suggests, for example, the institutionalization of planning capabilities in local city halls and boards of education. It also means

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[61] See Anthony G. Oettinger, "Information Resources: Knowledge and Power in the 21st Century," Science, Vol. 209, No. 4452 (4 July 1980), pp. 191-981; and David R. Lide, Jr., "Critical Data for Critical Needs," Science, Vol. 212, No. 4501 (19 June 1981), pp. 1343-1349.

[62] Martin Rein, "The Social Policy of the Firm," Policy Sciences, Vol. 14, No. 2 (April 1982), pp. 117-135.

[63] Scott Greer, "Citizens' Voluntary Governing Boards: Waiting for the Quorum," Policy Sciences, Vol. 14, No. 2 (April 1982), pp. 165-178; for more specific examples, see Chava Nachmias and J. John Palen, "Membership in Voluntary Neighborhood Associations and Urban Revitalization," Policy Sciences, Vol. 14, No. 2 (April 1982), pp. 179-193.

[64] Yates, Bureaucratic Democracy, Chap. 7.

a close reading of judicial precedents to determine legal parameters for the newly-allocated political responsibilities. One might easily predict that the heated battles fought between federal and state officials or agencies will be reenacted between state and local bureaucracies as the federal government withdraws from the administrative lists.

In this decentralized milieu, one can foresee two appropriate roles for the federal government. First, there are the constitutional powers ascribed to the national government to manage problems agreed to be too large for local units of government (e.g., national defense) or where appreciable economies of scale can be realized (e.g., tax collection). Second, and more important in this context, the national government could serve as an "impartial" arbitrator in those areas where state versus local conflicts occur, i.e., a crisis management role. This naturally raises the question of authority, but the literature of arbitration and mediation is rich with examples of how this particular obstacle can be overcome.

#### V. THE CEREMONY OF INNOCENCE

This is hardly a complete recitation of how policies and programs can tame hostile conditions and ameliorate the difficulties or governing crises that might otherwise attend the transition from a centralized to a decentralized bureaucratic structure. Rather, these proposals are only intended to be illustrative of what approaches one might take in a policy science/future studies paradigm. In other words, how one can meld goals, trends, conditions into defensible projections and then pose realistic, directed policy alternatives. Obviously the proffered policies and programs are only proposed; each would require careful

examination to understand its own dynamics and ultimate merit. Each should be "vetted" in its own right. But the basic methodology can be seen as applicable in attempting to understand social and political problems in the face of significant future uncertainties.

One could easily draw a futures scenario in which the shift of governmental units and authority from the present centralized level to more decentralized units could precipitate a genuine crisis in government. Furthermore, if one assumes the tenuous nature of the political animal, and the fragility of its social veneer, such a localized crisis could spread and possibly cause irreparable (or at least long-term) damage to the political fabric of a nation-state. Such a scenario would be perfectly plausible and a respectable product of a futurist's study. However, such an analysis is too shallow; we are tasked to go beyond the mere casting of dismal dice. We must ask how we can beneficially shape, how we can affect the Second Coming. The poet Yeats seemingly abdicates or is ineffective in this role:

The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out  
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi  
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert  
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,  
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,  
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it  
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.

As policy scientists and policy-oriented futures researchers, we cannot simply pose future scenarios and specious warnings. We cannot embrace or accept the "ceremony of innocence." The policy sciences mean to define, understand, and affect these futures; it is our charge not to let tools lie unused, that is, to permit the "rough beast" arrive unknown, unannounced. We have within our intellectual powers the rough

capability to outline the Second Coming, and surely we have the moral responsibility to do so. To ignore or reject these mandates would admit to Yeats' most cutting commentary:

The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.

As political scientists, future scholars, policy scientists, or workaday citizens, such a situation could only result in "mere anarchy," surely a condition few could favor. This paper has proposed one means at our disposal to avoid such contingencies. It is only part of the policy sciences charter to propose them; it is a large part of the charter to make sure they are used. And that, I suggest, is the real challenge for those confronting the crisis in governing.